

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2012**

Members Present: Chair Diane Martin, Jean Brookman, Carol Cooney, Jeff DePina, April Dipollina, Lauralyn Lewis, and Thomas Dailey, Regional Director, DDS South Region

Members Absent: Michael Del Sole, Susan Gardner, Lori Richardson, and Danielle Shepard

Guests: Kim Wollschleager, Parent

Chairperson's Report

- **Call to Order** – Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
- **Public Comment** – None presented.
- **Review of Minutes** - A review ensued of the September 19, 2012, meeting minutes. Two minor corrections were noted.

In the presence of a quorum and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2012, meeting with the corrections noted during the meeting.

Regional Director's Report

- **Personnel Services** – The deficit in the region's personnel services account continues. The hiring freeze remains in effect with only nursing and case management positions being approved for refill. The Commissioner on a bi-weekly basis is reviewing all position requests. The Region is working to reduce OT and decrease the deficit through the consolidation of three programs and the closure of one CLA in New London. It is important to note that these measures will not result in the loss of programming for consumers or jobs for staff.
- **Cooper Lane** – A community living arrangement (CLA) on Cooper Lane in Hamden is now home to five former residents of Southbury Training School (STS).
- **Request for Proposal (RFP)** – The South Region has issued one RFP for the development of two licensed group homes to provide residential services to individuals returning to Connecticut from out of state placements and age-outs.

In response to an inquiry, Mr. Dailey stated that there are 20 individuals from the South Region of DDS living in out of state residential schools. The region is working to return these individuals to Connecticut as their parents allow. Typically, Lead Educational Agencies (LEAs) initiate out of state placements.

- **Florida Institute** – DDS’ visiting team concluded that the health and safety needs of DDS individuals were being met; however, DDS is working with those families who want their loved ones to return to Connecticut. There are 10 DDS consumers living there.
- **Wallingford Office Relocation** – A new space for the Wallingford Office has been identified, and we are moving forward with negotiations. The move must be cost neutral.
- **Level of Need (LON) Manual** – A new LON manual will be issued soon. Once issued, the Regional Director’s office will forward a copy of it to the Council.
- **Forum on Recovery** – The South Region of DDS, in concert with Dungarvin Connecticut, LLC, and Continuum of Care, Inc., will host a Forum on Recovery on 12/12/12, at the Meriden Police Training Academy. The forum is open to providers, staff, family, and consumers from all regions. Providing services to individuals with intellectual disabilities who struggle with alcohol and drug addiction is a challenge for the department.
- **Procedures** – Revised procedures on resource planning for graduates and direct hires will be issued soon.
- **Woodbridge** – Woodbridge is a DDS operated program designed to provide temporary residential services (90-120 days) to individuals with very intensive psychiatric needs with capacity for six. It has been open for about 10 years and is located in the North Region of DDS. Due to over capacity, admissions to this site are being temporarily suspended.
- **Funding Priorities** - A letter to families regarding DDS funding priorities for this fiscal year will be posted to the DDS website. A copy of the letter will be emailed to Council members once it is issued.
- **Families Endure Long Wait for Care Article** – The Council discussed a recent news article related to DDS waitlist. In response to an inquiry, Mr. Dailey discussed the Wait List Lawsuit Settlement Agreement, which provided an infusion of legislatively mandated residential funding to individuals on the waitlist over a 4-year period. The settlement agreement has sunset.
- **Mission Kick Off** – Discussion ensued on expenses related to the Mission Kick Off event scheduled for 11/26/12. Member Lewis stated she had recently learned that staff covered part of the cost. Mr. Dailey confirmed that he supported departmental expenses for cake, and posters and funds used to cover Kick Off expenses came from a funding account that is not used to pay for consumer services. The work and accomplishments of DDS’ Self Advocate Coordinators and all who participated in the development of the new Mission and Vision statements are what really drove this celebratory event.
- **Helpline Staff** – Members of the Council praised new South Region Helpline case manager John Allen for his exemplary level of service to individuals served by the Helpline.
- **Waiver systems** – DDS is reviewing its responsibilities under the waiver.

- **Program Review Committee (PRC) Pilot Project** – The DDS PRC pilot project has concluded. The results of the pilot will be presented to the Commissioner’s executive team soon. South Region Health Services Director Betty Zoubek will be invited back to share the results of the pilot with this Council. The overall goal of the pilot is to reduce overuse of psychotropic medications by providers. Recommendations include a waiver of the PRC requirements for top performing providers.

Member Brookman said that Vista Vocational Services recently started to use a prepackaged medication service, and asked if this was in response to DDS requirements. Mr. Dailey stated that the use of bubble packaging is common in our system; however, Vista might be trying to adjust to waiver requirements related to medication administration and nursing oversight.

- **Collection of Email Addresses** – Kathy Whitbread has been invited to attend the January meeting to discuss how the Council might use technology to enhance communications among families - possibly through a list serve or family group website. The Council is better positioned than DDS to pursue this particular concept.
- **Storm Sandy** – 108 CLAs relocated during the storm. Emergency Operation Centers were activated across the department. There were no reports of inquiries. Camp Harkness suffered some damage.

Old Business

- **2012-2013 Council Priorities** – The Council will focus its efforts on the following two priorities:

Creative Housing Initiative – Café to Go was held on 10/4 at Puffins restaurant in Groton from 5:30 – 8pm. The event was well received. Member Cooney noted that it was an excellent opportunity for advocacy, networking, and exploration of possibilities. The NR has plans to hold a similar event in their region. Next step is to form an on-going family workgroup. Discussion ensued on the direction the workgroup would take in terms of topics. Suggestions included further exploration of the Community Companion Home Model, more networking, and advocacy, the development of frequently asked questions fact sheets on housing and the creation of a family-to-family list serve, website, or blog.) Mr. Dailey suggested that individuals who do not have comprehensive needs and who live with minimal DDS supports are in great need of advocacy.

Enhance communication and outreach to DDS families, school districts, and professionals in the community to educate them about DDS and things they could be doing to prepare people for successful transitions from school to work or higher education – Members Lewis and Brookman met with Robin Wood, DDS Director of Family Support Strategies, on this initiative. During the meeting, outlets for disseminating information were discussed, and were expanded to a myriad of community organizations and professionals. The pros and cons of getting information out to families early were also discussed. In the end, it was decided that the benefits of do so outweighs the negatives. The group also determined that the best approach would be to limit the amount of information being disseminated to the Great Expectations booklet, a one-page hand out on transition, and a cover letter. Two draft cover letters were distributed for the Council’s review. Initial feedback was extremely positive, and members Lewis and Brookman were commended for their progress on this initiative. Additional feedback

may be emailed to either of them following the meeting. Member Dipollina suggested the development of a road show with examples of success stories. Member DePina volunteered to participate in a documentary about his many successes in life.

New Business

- The 2013 Schedule of Meetings was distributed and reviewed.

In the presence of a quorum and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the 2013 Schedule of Meetings as presented.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DDS South Regional Advisory and Planning Council is January 16, 2013, at 6:00 p.m., at the Henry Carter Hull Library in Clinton.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by:
Jolie Crescimano-Goss
Executive Secretary, DDS-SR